



## Karl de Costa

Partner, through his Professional Corporation



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### legal expertise

Probate law focusing on disputed and contested probate and trust matters, estate and trust administration, and estate planning.

### representative matters

- Handled principal and ancillary probate administrations for the executor of the estate of an international businessman in the U.S., Hong Kong, and the Philippines and successfully transferred assets governed by the laws of Liberia, Panama, and China; negotiated favorable tax treatment for the estate in multiple jurisdictions and participated in negotiations for sale of multimillion dollar global business in which the decedent was part owner.
- Assisted in invalidating a purported trust disinheriting the adopted daughter of a deceased woman on grounds that the trust resulted from undue influence exerted by the woman's neighbor. The favorable ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeal and the California Supreme Court. Through subsequent probate court proceedings, the daughter was determined to be entitled to inherit her mother's estate through intestacy.
- Served as first-chair trial counsel in successful effort to remove an ex-husband trustee on grounds of imprudent investments and hostility to beneficiaries.
- Analyzed operative pleadings and key documents in pending will contest on behalf of a prominent charity; drafted a formal response letter to the contestants' counsel resulting in the complete and voluntary withdrawal of the suit.
- Assisted with successful prosecution of a claim and defense of all counterclaims regarding ownership of over \$10 million in artwork improperly held by breaching fiduciary. An even better verdict was obtained after appellate proceedings (including a successful opposition to review in the California Supreme Court). The client was ultimately entitled to all artwork

### practice areas

litigation

- commercial litigation
- tax and trusts & estates
- nonprofit organizations
- trusts & estates
- trusts & estates litigation

### admissions

California, 1996  
U.S. District Court  
Central District of California, 1996  
U.S. Court of Appeals  
Ninth Circuit, 1996  
California Supreme Court, 1996

### education

University of California Los Angeles School of Law, J.D., 1996; Order of the Coif; *Phi Delta Phi*  
Graduated 4th in class  
Colorado College, B.A., 1993; *magna cum laude*; *Phi Beta Kappa*  
J. Juan Reid Award for Excellence in the Liberal Arts

### other career experience

- Judicial Extern to the

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new york  
t 212.509.3900  
f 212.509.7239

washington, dc  
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f 202.355.7899



Karl de Costa

she sought plus a significant damages award.

Hon. Calvin K. Ashland,  
Chief Justice of the  
Bankruptcy Court of the  
Central District of  
California

## honors & awards

- "Top 5% of lawyers in Southern California," *Southern California Super Lawyers* (2010-2020)
- Recognized by *Best Lawyers in America*® in Litigation - Trusts and Estates (2021-2026)

## headlines

37 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*® for 2026  
*Best Lawyers*, August 21, 2025

34 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2025  
August 15, 2024

38 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2024  
August 17, 2023

26 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2022  
August 19, 2021

33 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2021  
August 20, 2020

MSK Attorneys Named to the List of 2019 *Southern California Super Lawyers*  
January 30, 2019

MSK Attorneys Named to the 2017 List of *Super Lawyers*  
January 20, 2017

MSK Launches Its New Trusts & Estates Blog  
May 27, 2014

## media mentions

MSK Attorneys Named to the List of 2016 Southern California Super Lawyers  
January 20, 2016

26 MSK Attorneys Named to 2014 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List  
January 2014



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26 MSK Attorneys Named to 2013 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List  
January 2013

25 Named to 2012 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List  
January 23, 2012

24 Named to 2011 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List  
January 25, 2011

28 Named to 2010 Southern California Super Lawyers List  
January 26, 2010

### **client alerts**

Higher Learning: A Potentially Expensive Lesson About 529 Plans  
*MSK Client Alert*, May 2, 2016